

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-6 (previously canceled)

7. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 40, wherein the spacer members project from the second major face of the sheet and have a sufficient resilience that the perforations of the sheet remain open during normal use and the second side of the article is not normally pressed against the surface.
8. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 39, wherein the spacer members are discontinuous.
9. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 39, wherein the spacer members are continuous.
10. (original) A breathable article according to claim 9, wherein the continuous spacer members extend across substantially all of at least one side of the sheet.
11. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 9, wherein the spacer members comprise a network of ribs on the respective side or sides of the sheet.
12. (original) A breathable article according to claim 11, wherein an air-permeable sheet cover member extends between adjacent ribs and is secured thereto to enclose an air space between the ribs.
13. (original) A breathable article according to claim 12, wherein the air-permeable sheet cover member comprises a water absorbent fabric.
14. (original) A breathable article according to claim 12, wherein the air-permeable sheet cover member comprises a waterproof but vapour-permeable membrane.
15. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 39, wherein the sheet further includes a hollow depression or chamber provided in the first major face of the sheet in the region of each perforation.

16. (original) A breathable article according to claim 15, wherein the depression or chamber is so configured and arranged as to permit air passing from the first to the second side of the article to accumulate in the depression or chamber under increased vapour pressure prior to passing out to the second side of the article.

17. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 15, wherein at least one of the depressions or chambers is associated with more than one perforation.

18. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 15, wherein each dome projection corresponds with a hollow depression or chamber of the first major face of the sheet.

19. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 39, when permanently or releasably affixed to the surface.

20. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 39, being a cushioning or lining article for locating between a person or animal and a surface selected from the surfaces of apparel and clothing and portions thereof, seats and portions thereof, wheelchairs and portions thereof, headwear, footwear, body protectors, body armour, sports shields, bedding, upholstery coverings, orthopaedic casts, orthopaedic supports, orthopaedic hard braces, and other articles against which the body of the person or animal, or a portion thereof, can be compressed in use.

21. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 39, being a medical or veterinary dressing.

Claims 22-26 (previously canceled)

27. (previously presented) A breathable fabric according to claim 41, wherein the spacer members project by a distance which is substantially the same across the relevant major face of the sheet.

28. (previously presented) A breathable fabric according to claim 41, wherein the spacer members are discontinuous.

29. (previously presented) A breathable fabric according to claim 41, wherein the spacer members are continuous.

30. (original) A breathable fabric according to claim 29, wherein the continuous spacer members extend across substantially all of at least one side of the sheet.

31. (previously presented) A breathable fabric according to claim 29, wherein the spacer members comprise a network of ribs on the respective side or sides of the sheet.

32. (original) A breathable fabric according to claim 31, wherein an air-permeable sheet cover member extends between adjacent ribs and is secured thereto to enclose an air space between the ribs.

33. (original) A breathable fabric according to claim 32, wherein the air-permeable sheet cover member comprises a water-absorbent fabric.

34. (original) A breathable fabric according to claim 32, wherein the air-permeable sheet cover member comprises a waterproof but vapour-permeable membrane.

Claims 35-37 (previously canceled)

38. (previously amended) A breathable fabric according to claim 41, wherein each dome projection corresponds with a hollow depression or chamber in the first major face of the sheet.

39. (previously amended) A breathable article for disposition in use between part of a human or animal body and a surface, said article comprising a sheet having a first side directed in use towards said body part and a second side directed in use towards said surface, said sheet having perforations provided therethrough, the first and second sides being in air flow communication with each other through said perforations and each of said perforations defining an internal chamber having an outwardly-extending dome projection providing a concavity directed toward said first side and to surround an adjacent portion of the perforation, said dome projection being flexible and providing a resilient restoring force against opening of said portion of the perforation due to increase in pressure within said chamber, said second side having spacer members associated therewith and located laterally away from the dome projections to permit flexure of the dome projections when said article is in contact with said surface.

40. (previously presented) A breathable article according to Claim 39, wherein the spacer members project by a distance that is substantially the same across said second side of the sheet to permit the article to conform in use to the shape of the person or animal or the surface.

41. (previously amended) A breathable fabric comprising a sheet having first and second major faces and formed of a substantially impermeable material having perforations provided therethrough, each of said perforations defining an internal chamber having an outwardly-extending dome projection providing a concavity directed toward said first major face and to surround an adjacent portion of the perforation, said dome projection being flexible and providing a resilient restoring force against opening of said portion of the perforation due to increase in pressure within said chamber, characterised in that there is further provided a plurality of spacer members which are located laterally away from the dome projections and project from said second major face between perforations of the sheet such as to permit flexure of the dome projections when said article is in contact with a surface.

42. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 39 wherein said sheet comprises an elastomeric material.

43. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 42 wherein the resilience of said spacer members differs from the resilience of the outwardly extending dome projections.

44. (previously presented) A breathable article according to claim 42 wherein said elastomeric material comprises foamed neoprene.

45. (previously presented) A breathable fabric according to claim 41 wherein said sheet comprises an elastomeric material.

46. (previously presented) A breathable fabric according to claim 45 wherein the resilience of said spacer members differs from the resilience of the outwardly extending dome projections.

47. (previously presented) A breathable fabric according to claim 45 wherein said elastomeric material comprises foamed neoprene.

48. (new) A breathable article for disposition in use between part of a human or animal body and a surface, said article comprising a sheet having a first side directed in use towards said body part and a second side directed in use towards said surface, said sheet having perforations provided therethrough, the first and second sides being in air flow communication with each other through said perforations and each of said perforations defining an internal chamber having a dome providing a concavity directed toward said first side and to surround an adjacent portion of the perforation, said dome being flexible and providing a resilient restoring force against opening of said portion of the perforation due to increase in pressure within said chamber, said second side having spacer members associated therewith that, as compared to the flexible domes, are rigid and are located laterally away from the domes in an encompassing manner to permit and not to inhibit flexure of the domes when said article is in contact with said surface.

49. (new) A breathable fabric comprising a sheet having first and second major faces and formed of a substantially impermeable material having perforations provided therethrough, each of said perforations defining an internal chamber having a dome providing a concavity directed toward said first major face and to surround an adjacent portion of the perforation, said dome being flexible and providing a resilient restoring force against opening of said portion of the perforation due to increase in pressure within said chamber, characterised in that there is further provided a plurality of spacer members which

- (a) as compared to the flexible domes, are rigid,
- (b) are located laterally away from the dome-like projections and encompass them,
- (c) project from said second major face between perforations of the sheet such as to permit and not to inhibit flexure of the domes when said article is in contact with a surface.